

Old Town North Small Area Plan (OTN SAP) Advisory Group Meeting #3
Thursday, December 17, 2015, 7:00 – 9:00 PM
City Hall, Sister Cities Conference Room

December 17, 2015 ADVISORY GROUP DRAFT MEETING NOTES

INTRODUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING

1. Chairperson Maria Wasowski introduced the new Advisory Group Member, Marie McKenney Tavernini, representative of the Urban Design Advisory Committee.
2. The Summary Meeting Notes for Advisory Group Meetings #1 and 2 were finalized with no further edits and will be uploaded, as final, on the OTN SAP Update webpage.
3. Chairperson Maria Wasowski again thanked Jeff Strup, AREP, for hosting the November Charrette.

CHARRETTE DEBRIEF

1. **Staff Presentation** - A staff presentation was given summarizing the outcome of the 5-day Charrette which was held on November 16-20, 2015. The presentation highlighted the draft Plan Framework Elements including: (a) planning categories; (b) goals, objectives, and themes; and (c) plan design concepts relating to land use; street networks, streetscapes and view sheds; housing affordability; historic preservation; retail mix; and environmental sustainability.
2. **Updated Project Assessment** - An updated Project Assessment (Visioning Tool) dated December 16, 2015 was distributed highlighting input from staff, the Advisory Group and also input from the Planning Commission during the Public Hearing on December 1, 2015 and comments made by the City Council during the Public Hearing on December 12, 2015.
3. **Updated Framework Public Comment List** – An updated Framework Public Comment List dated December 16, 2015 was also distributed organized by Planning Category with input/ideas on goals, objectives and themes and with other comments (challenges/issues) noted under each category. The Updated Framework Public Comment List reflects a combination of the public input on the draft Framework Elements from a variety of sources, including the Charrette, online engagement tools and individuals during or after the Charrette.

ADVISORY GROUP FEEDBACK ON CHARRETTE PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

Comment: People in Marina Towers and the North end of OTN do not consider Montgomery Park as the hub. **Response:** Maybe there is an opportunity to develop another anchor park in the North.

Comment: Impressed by the Charrette Team meetings in the mornings where at times up to thirty City staff personnel from all departments were present and there was a great flow of ideas.

Question: Not clear on the former ABC/Giant site and what the redevelopment will be.

Response: It will be a mixed use development with ground floor retail and residential on upper floors. The building heights will transition with respect to neighboring developments.

Comment: This illustrates the complexity of the process for this SAP since several developments are already in the pipeline. **Response:** This process will track them as efficiently as possible, recognizing that some are approved or in the review process. There are others which, because they have not been submitted yet, could be more aligned with this planning process.

Comment: The question by City Council about the applicability of the Charrette to other planning processes might be best determined by the City staff and Advisory Group Chair Maria Wasowski. **Response:** Chair Wasowski indicated she is talking to staff about this prospect.

Comment: A lot was gained from having the meetings and the staff in the neighborhood during the Charrette. Staff had the chance to see and experience the neighborhood at night. Expenses saved on hiring a consultant made up for the cost of additional staff hours.

Comment: The location provided residents with accessibility. Was concerned in the beginning about concentration of work; however, there was a tremendous amount of output.

Comment: Concerned that the process was rushed and many residents and members of the community were not able to participate due to work or other constraints. There was not enough time to get the word out. **Response:** If this is utilized anywhere in the City in the future, staff will note the benefit of incorporating more lead time for more extensive outreach.

Comment: Having that Charrette process in the beginning is good to set the stage. Maybe in the future, announcing early would be better.

Question: Was there opportunity for online input? **Response:** Yes; there is a permanent Comment Board on the OTN SAP Update webpage that the public has utilized to share comments regarding the Charrette (we uploaded Charrette information on the webpage for people to respond to) and they can use the Comment Board to share non-Charrette comments. Additionally, an Alex Engage online civic engagement tool was established for the Charrette and ran until December 13th that also generated online comments. Additionally, people who could not attend public meetings during the Charrette could come in during the day and drop hand

written comments into a comment box or use the public computer that was available. Additionally, people sent Nancy Williams emails.

Question: Is there a way to document what times people came to the space to get an idea of people's preferences and availability. **Response:** That is an important point that can be examined to determine if we can construct that information.

Comment: While we do not want to stop the existing projects, we have to figure out what they are and how they fit into the plan. Recommend that we request developers to give presentations about their proposals to the Advisory Group and the Community. **Response:** It is anticipated that among the educational sessions which Advisory Group members have asked for, project descriptions/updates can be provided, particularly as Phases II (Study) and III (Testing) get underway.

Comment: The lack of structure and the openness of the Charrette process was an advantage that allowed people to participate more.

Comment: Liked the organic nature of the Charrette. Planning Commission mentioned that it is good to see and hear ideas generated earlier in the process before designs are too far developed.

Comment: On the Land Use design concept, the word "Innovative" on the NRG site might be exciting for some, but scary for others.

Comment: There are a lot of unknowns on that site and it will be hard to work with.

Comment: Would like to know the City staff's reaction to looking at the community during the Charrette. What stood out about the character of the community and how are we different.

Response: The P&Z Director expressed appreciation for being asked and said he would raise the matter with staff.

Comment: This was a unique process and shows the need for openness. The keypad polling during the second and third public meetings was a great idea because some people are reluctant to express their opinion in public. The polling exercise was anonymous and was a nice way to give input without holding back.

Comment: Compared to the Waterfront Plan effort, which was great but had its ups and downs, this gives a better opportunity because it's more of an open process.

PROPOSED ADVISORY GROUP SUBCOMMITTEE CONFIGURATION FOR PHASES II AND III

As the OTN SAP Update planning process moves to Phases II and III, respectively, to study and test the draft Framework Elements, staff is proposing the Advisory Group will be divided into four Subcommittees by Planning Category Topical Areas:

1. Planning, Design and Land Use + Housing

2. Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability + Transportation
3. Open Space, Recreation and Cultural Activities + Historic Preservation
4. Economic Development

Subcommittee Configuration – A matrix reflecting the four suggested Subcommittees, the co-chairs of the Subcommittees and the memberships of each was distributed. The Chair indicated that if someone would like to switch to a different Subcommittee that is acceptable but the hope is that there will be someone from that Subcommittee who will switch as well, to even things out. The goal is to have an appropriate number of members on each Subcommittee to ensure that work will get done. The Subcommittee members along with the Interdepartmental City Project Team will work on further developing the themes/concepts which fall within their respective categories and developing steps for studying and testing them for feasibility, modification or alternative approaches. Anticipated Subcommittee meetings will be scheduled from January to April. **See attached handout – Attachment 1(Subcommittee Configuration).**

Consensus: There was consensus that the second Wednesday of each month for Subcommittee Meetings is a good time. **Follow-up:** Follow-up is needed as to how many Subcommittee meetings will occur each month and, if more than one will occur monthly, what other date in the month should be identified, or should both meetings be held on the same day. P&Z will examine the options stressing that staff time is a factor that must be considered as well.

Comments regarding to the Advisory Group Subcommittee Formation and Meeting Schedule

Comment: Might want to consider teaming Transportation with Land Use, rather than Housing.

Comment: Might be better to work on the topics in parallel rather than discuss one topic each month.

Question: Would be helpful to know what the desired outcome is from those Subcommittees. Concern was expressed that with the parallel approach, people might proceed in their own silo.

Follow-up: P&Z indicated that it will draft a purpose statement for the Subcommittees. The process will make sure that there is regular cross pollination through the monthly Advisory Group Meetings.

Comment: Maybe a parallel process with Advisory Group check-in then a check-in with the larger community. **Response:** There are two anticipated Community Meetings that are anticipated to occur during the Subcommittee work – one mid-way, anticipated around the end of February, and one anticipated at the end of May.

Comment: Will the Subcommittee Meetings be open to the public? **Response:** Yes; all Advisory Group related meetings are open to the public.

ADVISORY GROUP STANDING MEETINGS FOR JANUARY TO MAY 2016

Staff proposed the fourth Monday of each month, from 7-9 pm for standing Advisory Group Meetings, with meetings to fall on the following dates from January to May 2016, and a mini Charrette to be held in June:

- Monday, January 25, 2016, 7:00 – 9:00 PM: *OTN SAP Advisory Group Meeting #4*
- Monday, February 29, 2016, 7:00 – 9:00 PM: *OTN SAP Advisory Group Meeting #5*
- Monday, March 28, 2016, 7:00 -9:00 PM: *OTN SAP Advisory Group Meeting #6*
- Monday, April 25, 2016, 7:00 – 9:00 PM: *OTN SAP Advisory Group Meeting #7*
- Monday, May 23, 2016, 7:00 – 9:00 PM: *OTN SAP Advisory Group Meeting #8*

Consensus: There was consensus around the above meeting schedule for the Advisory Group.

MEETING SPACE

Staff indicated its desire is to rotate meetings throughout the planning area. Accordingly, staff has reached out to several facilities (Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Sheraton, Salvation Army, and ARHA) and will work to confirm locations as soon as possible. Metro Stage offered to provide space as available. The Royal Street Restaurant was also suggested as a location. Of course, depending on the size of the space, some of these locations are fitting for Subcommittee meetings while others are fitting for Advisory Group meetings which will be taken into consideration when scheduling.

Advisory Group – Meeting of December 17, 2015

- Maria Wasowski, Chair (Planning Commission and Transportation Commission)
- Engin Artemel (Community Representative – At Large)
- Anna Bentley (Community Representative – At Large)
- Chip Carlin (Board of Architectural Review – Old & Historic District)
- Elizabeth Chimento (Community Representative - At Large)
- Herbert J. (Herb) Cooper-Levy (Community Representative - At Large)
- Krista Di Iaconi, Property Owner Representative
- Carolyn Griffin (Community Representative – At Large)
- Kevin Harris (Community Representative – Alexandria Redevelopment& Housing Authority Residents)
- Bruce M. Machanic (Business Representative)
- Carlos Mejias (Business Representative)
- Thomas F. Soapes (Community Representative - NOTICE)
- Jeff Strup (Property Owner Representative)
- Marie Mckenney Tavernini (Urban Design Advisory Committee)
- Christa Watters (Community Representative – Homeowner Associations/At-Large)